

Levine, Amy-Jill and Douglas Knight. *The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

## Chapter Fourteen

In this final chapter of their introduction, Levine and Knight bring the story to a close with an investigation of Wisdom Literature and the issue of Theodicy. The sagely include deuterocanonical texts like Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon along with the usual suspects, Job and Ecclesiastes along with Proverbs.

But unlike so many introductions to the topic they also take time to discuss ‘lady wisdom’ and the importance of the personification of wisdom as a woman in biblical literature.

The bulk of the chapter is, nonetheless, spent on Job and his dialogues with his three friends (and God).

It has been said that Job is the one figure in the Hebrew Bible whom readers know the best and understand the least (p. 439).

So to make sure that their readers can’t suffer that indignity, L. and K. go on to ‘rightly divide’ the text, setting it in its ANE context (with a glance at other wisdom tales like Job’s) and summarizing the argument of the book as a whole.

I was, I admit, quite pleasantly surprised that they also included the *Confessions of Jeremiah* in this chapter and the connection that the final confession in particular has to Job. Too few discuss Jeremiah’s confessions as confessions anymore. It was good to hear the voice of old von Rad again.

The volume ends with a brief ‘conclusion’ which folk might want to read first- It gives readers a proper ‘heads-up’ as to what they can expect.

Having now completed the entire volume I have only a few observations on the whole:

- 1- It’s fantastically written.
- 2- Our authors are gifted exegetes.

- 3- Their style is engaging and informative without ever being pedantic or condescending. And finally
- 4- Those looking for a volume to use in OT intro courses should seriously consider using this one. There isn't anything like it out there.

With gratitude from a thankful reader- I applaud Levine and Knight.

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